

REMARKS

The Official Action of April 5, 2004, and the prior art cited and relied upon therein have been carefully studied. The claims in the application are now claims 1-14, and these claims define patentable subject matter warranting their allowance. Favorable reconsideration and such allowance are respectfully urged.

Claims 1-14 remain in the application for consideration.

Applicant has included amended Fig. 4 to correct identification of struts (24).

Applicant thanks the Examiner for his indication that claims 2-7, 9, 13 and 14 are allowable subject to being rewritten in independent form.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 8 and 10-12 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Schulze '259. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection especially as applied to claim 1 as amended.

As the Examiner will note, claim 1 has been amended to indicate that supporting tube (22) is spaced apart from valve body (4) by struts (24). This feature is clearly not shown or taught in Schulze '259, which teaches that supporting tube (14) is engaged directly to the inner circumference of

valve body (26). (See lines 51-54 of Schulze which indicates that "Ring (2) is intended to form a friction fit sealing relationship with the inside diameter of the gas pipe to which it is fitted....") This of course precludes the passage of gas around supporting tube (14), whereas in the claimed invention, gas does pass around the supporting tube (22), which serves to substantially protect spring 42 of the claimed invention from passage of gas over spring (42) located within supporting tube 22.

The prior art documents made of record and not relied upon have been noted along with the implication that such documents are deemed by the PTO to be insufficiently pertinent to warrant their applications against any of applicant's claims.

Favorable reconsideration and allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appln. No. 10/630,980
Amdt. dated June 30, 2004
Reply to Office Action of April 5, 2004
ANNOTATED SHEET SHOWING CHANGES

FIG. 4

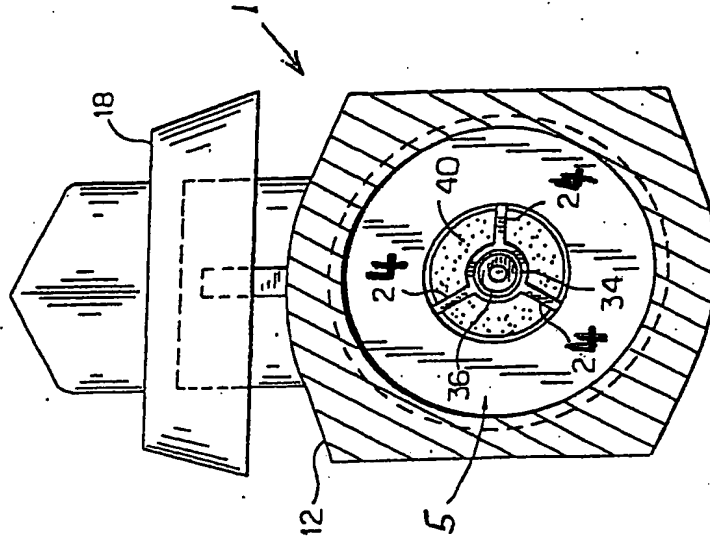


FIG. 3

